



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

AHAD HA-'AM'S ESSAYS

על פרשת דרכים . קובץ מאמרים מאת אחד העם . חלק רביעי הוצאת
חברת 'אחיאסף' בווארשא . ברלין תרע"ג . pp. 247. 8°.

Selected Essays by Ahad Ha'am. Translated from the Hebrew
by LEON SIMON. Philadelphia: JEWISH PUBLICATION
SOCIETY OF AMERICA, 1912. pp. 347. 8°.

Achad-Haam. Am Scheidewege. Erster Band. Aus dem Hebräi-
schen von ISRAEL FRIEDLAENDER. Zweite verbesserte und
vermehrte Auflage. Berlin: JÜDISCHER VERLAG, 1913.
viii + 271. 8°.

The three publications just indicated by title strikingly illustrate Ahad Ha'am's unique position in the world of Hebrew letters. His collected writings which merely reproduce essays, published, read and discussed previously, are yet read, or rather re-read, with undiminished eagerness by a constantly growing public. But A. H.'s influence is by no means limited to the Hebrew reading world. He is the only modern Jewish writer whose words find an echo in the whole Jewish Diaspora and penetrate the mysterious and impenetrable boundary which divides Jewry into East and West. It is significant that the first German translation, as well as the first English translation, of a neo-Hebraic work is connected with the name of Ahad Ha'am, and he who carefully observes public Jewish life in its practical manifestations will not fail to detect the powerful though silent share of A. H.'s ideas in the shaping of Jewish reality.

This exceptional character of A. H.'s literary activity cannot be accounted for by mere literary merits, greatly and justly admired as they are. The secret of A. H.'s appeal to the Jews all over the world lies, so it seems to us, in the fact that his formulation

of the Jewish problem is such as to appeal to universal Israel. For the Jewish problem had in modern times been always formulated and handled as a problem of *Jews*, and the problem of Jews, depending on external divisions, was, indeed, radically different in the East and in the West; all that one section had a right to expect of the other was sympathy, at most charity. But A. H.'s formulation of the Jewish problem as a problem of *Judaism*, as the supreme question of our spiritual existence, points out the danger which threatens all Jews alike and appeals to the highest aspirations which lie hidden in the heart of every thinking Jew. No wonder therefore that the formulation of the Jewish problem as a problem of the Jewish spirit, or, as we say nowadays, of Jewish culture, possesses an irresistible attraction for all Jews, irrespective of origin and affiliations, and is now disseminated, as seen by the above publications, through the medium of the three languages which practically monopolize the higher literary output of Jewry.

The fourth volume of Ahad Ha'am's essays is largely made up of reproductions from the *Hashiloah*, still the most representative Hebrew publication, and to a lesser extent from other periodicals. The only new contribution consists in extracts from papers and letters bearing on the history of the order *Benē Mōshē* which at one time played an important, though silent, part in the development of the Palestinian movement. The volume concludes with a brief but helpful analysis of the essays contained in all the four volumes. It may be added that several of the essays in the fourth volume were translated into English shortly after their first publication.

As might well be expected, the bulk of the volume is devoted to the Zionist movement in the large sense in which the author interprets it. But even those who stand outside the movement will read with keen interest his article on 'National Education', or his powerful, though cautious indictment of the Gymnasium in Jaffa. Those who admire Ahad Ha'am the man will find a reflection of his two-sided personality, cool, searching, implacable, yet loving, reverent and benign, in the beautiful,

analysing, yet touching necrologues on Lilienblum and Lewinsky. His article on the Russian revolution (p. 103) with its implacable logic and sharp-edged sarcasm will be read to-day, after his prophecy has become reality, with undiminished, if not heightened interest. His article on 'The Question mark of Judaism' indicates that A. H. is a keen observer of Jewish conditions in America. His short essay on 'Impudence' (p. 87), which clothes serious thoughts in a graceful and even playful form, shows A. H. as the master of the essay. The emphasis, however, of the present volume lies no doubt on the two articles that stand at its head: 'The Sovereignty of Reason' and 'Between two Stools'. By their subject-matter they are also the most interesting to the readers of this REVIEW.

'Between two Stools' indicates the attitude of those Jews who waver between Judaism and Christianity. The article is clothed in the form of a criticism of Claude Montefiore's *Commentary on the Gospels*,¹ and gives A. H. the opportunity to examine the cardinal differences between Judaism and Christianity. His analysis of the fundamental principles of Jewish ethics as contrasted with Christian ethics is probably the best and profoundest contribution to this momentous subject. The 'impersonal' character of Judaism and Jewish ethics, the refusal to accept a human being as the embodiment of the ideal, the definition of 'altruism' as 'inverse egotism', the objectiveness of the Jewish ideal of justice against the subjectiveness of the Christian conception of love, all these and many more thoughts, scattered throughout this brilliant study and uttered with an exquisite beauty and lucidity of expression, show what a rich harvest this great and difficult subject may yield when handled by a master.

His essay on 'The Sovereignty of Reason', which offers an analysis of the life-work of Maimonides and was called forth by his 700th anniversary, reaches even more directly into the domain of Jewish Science. By his vast erudition which extends over all branches of Jewish literature, by his wide historic out-

¹ An English translation of this article by Leon Simon appeared in the *Jewish Review*, London, September, 1910.

look, by his wonderfully balanced judgement Ahad Ha'am seems eminently fit to handle the tasks presented by Jewish Science. Surely the man who is able to interpret the present in the light of the past ought to succeed in making the past intelligible to the present. But A. H. has always fought shy of this province, and his essay on Maimonides remains the only attempt in this direction, an attempt which merely sharpens the edge of our regret by revealing possibilities which are consciously neglected. It is no exaggeration to say that the study on Maimonides is one of the most brilliant achievements of Ahad Ha'am's pen. All the great characteristics of his mind and style are shown to their best advantage in the treatment of a theme which has evidently been not only the object of close study but also of deep, one might say, affectionate interest. It is difficult to say what is more to be admired: the complete mastery over the material, the profound grasp of Maimonides's metaphysical doctrines, the original conception of the underlying principles of Maimonides's system of ethics, the subtle psychological inquiry into the connexion between the life and system of his hero, or the crystal-like, one is tempted to say, Maimonides-like lucidity with which a subject accessible but to few is made intelligible and even palatable to the ordinary Hebrew reader.

Though this is not the place for polemics, yet it is only fair to state that, with all our appreciation of the superior merits of Ahad Ha'am's essay, we cannot agree to its fundamental thesis. The greatest achievement of Maimonides lies, as A. H. indicates by the title, in the fact that he proclaimed the 'Sovereignty of Reason', that in a period, in which reason was made subservient to religion, he had the courage to make religion subservient to reason and to free the latter from all external authority. But this construction ascribes motives to Maimonides which are essentially modern and therefore an anachronism. To be sure, Maimonides believed in the sovereignty of reason, not, however, 'because religion is not above reason, but beneath it', but because religion is *identical* with reason. Maimonides at no time doubted and on many occasions emphatically acknowledged the divine

origin of the Pentateuch in the strictest sense of the word. This whole-hearted unquestioning acceptance, by a man of Maimonides's critical turn of mind, of a dogma which to-day is the first target of theological scepticism, is in itself characteristic of the period and its scholastic way of thinking to which Maimonides paid his tribute no less than the great Mohammedan philosophers, Alfarābī, Avicenna, or Averroes. However this may be, the belief, logically pursued, means not the sovereignty of reason, but the sovereignty of the divine. That Maimonides was far more radical and far more successful in his rationalism than his predecessors is more the result of his pedagogic outlook upon the Bible which enabled him to see in the Scriptures a popular manual of philosophy,² and still more so of his marvellous exegetic skill which made the Bible yield Aristotelian truths. Maimonides was ready to sacrifice what he considers the outer meaning of the Scriptures to the results of philosophy, but what his attitude would have been, if the utter incompatibility between Bible and Aristotle had been conclusively demonstrated to him, is difficult to say. Fortunately for him this incompatibility was not and could not be demonstrated. At any rate, it does not seem to us admissible to make Maimonides responsible for a conception which lay completely beyond the horizon of his period.

The English translation of Ahad Ha-'am offers a selection of essays culled from the three Hebrew volumes which had heretofore appeared. The essays chosen are of a more general and philosophic character, while those of a more decided publicistic tendency, particularly the articles containing A. H.'s criticism of Political Zionism were eliminated. The wisdom of this principle of selection is apparent, for it would have been purposeless to offer the criticism of a movement to a public to which the movement itself is little more than a name. The English translation,—and only

² I have dealt with this particular aspect of Maimonides's ideas in my article 'Maimonides as an Exegete' (*Annual of the Union of Literary Societies*, London, 1907).

he who has tried the experiment knows the difficulty of rendering Ahad Ha'am's clear-cut and idiomatic Hebrew into another language,—is an excellent piece of work. It is true to the language of the original and to the character of its own language,—no higher compliment can be paid to any translation. In some places the translation is too literal, at least for my taste. I have examined only a part of the volume, but I have found the following unnecessarily literal renderings: p. 42, l. 16, 'in the days when the temple stood'; p. 60, l. 16, 'like a stone which none has turned'; p. 77, l. 1, 'the destruction of the House [of God].' It is regrettable that the translator has been so sparing with his notes. The biblical verses which are known, of course, to the Hebrew public, should have been indicated in the translation; as they stand, they must be bewildering to the English reader. On the other hand, a note like the one on p. 45 which merely explains a Hebrew idiom of Ahad Ha'am, such as could easily have been rendered by a corresponding English phrase, spoils the effect of that beautiful little essay. P. 64, note 1, gives a misleading definition of Haskalah. 'The application of modern methods of research to Hebrew literature and Jewish history' is not exactly characteristic of the Haskalah, but rather of Jewish Science which is defined on p. 65, n. 1 (where, however, 'problems' ought to be stricken out). P. 75, n. 1, is a misunderstanding. The verse is a quotation from Jeremiah 27. 5. In conclusion I should like to point out a sin of omission which is of a more serious character. Mr. Simon has prefaced the volume by a thoughtful introduction in which he indicates his conception of Ahad Ha'am's philosophy, but he has failed to provide to readers, many of whom will hear Ahad Ha'am's name for the first time, with any biographical or bibliographical data. This is the more regrettable, as this is the first English book to be translated from modern Hebrew, and I should not wonder if many a reader even failed to recognize that Ahad Ha'am is a contemporary. It is to be hoped that a second edition may give Mr. Simon an opportunity to adopt the improvements suggested above.

The third publication may finally be mentioned as an indication of the constant spread of Ahad Ha'am's influence. The German edition of Ahad Ha'am is one of the few Jewish books in German which have lived to see a second edition. Ahad Ha'am's essays have evidently taken a deep hold on a certain section of German Jewry, particularly among the academic youth. I am informed that the Jewish student societies in Germany make the admission and promotion of their members—the Jewish societies follow the system of the *Burschenschaften*—dependent on the study of A. H.'s writings. The German translation differs in its make-up from the English. It limits itself to selections from the first Hebrew volume, except for the last essay on Nietzsche (from the second Hebrew volume) which was added in the new edition. The essays selected are mainly of a publicistic character bearing largely on the Palestinian movement, for the Jewish public in Germany is far better acquainted with that movement than it is in England or America. An introduction supplies the necessary biographical and bibliographical data and offers a short analysis of the principal ideas of Ahad Ha'am. The second edition has been carefully revised by the translator in conjunction with the author.

The *Jüdischer Verlag* promises the publication of a second volume of A. H.'s essays which is in the course of preparation by a different translator.

MITTWOCH'S ISLAMIC LITURGY AND CULT

Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des islamischen Gebets und Kultus.

By Prof. Dr. EUGEN MITTWOCH. [Reprint from *Abhandlungen der Königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.*]

Berlin, 1913, pp. 42. 4^o.

The above treatise anticipates a larger work by the same author which is to deal with 'the influence of Judaism upon the law of Islam in all its branches'. It limits itself to an examination of the Mohammedan cult and liturgy and endeavours to fix